

CLAIMS

1. A food blending container comprising an upper opening for accessing food in the container, a base, a location member upstanding from the base and having an opening at its lower end, a rotatable blending element locatable within the container to extend lengthwise of the container and arranged to lie over and be rotatable relative to the location member, and the element, upon rotation, being arranged to blend food product within the container, the blending element being drivable by external drive means drivably engageable with the upper end of the blending element.
2. A container according to Claim 1 wherein the location member extends from the base towards the upper end of the container.
3. A container according to Claim 1 or 2 wherein the location member is hollow and of tapered, section over its external surface, which surface also provides a support for the blending element.
4. A container according to Claim 3 wherein the blending element is of tapered, circular section over its internal surface to correspond to the external shape of the location member.
5. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the blending element extends from adjacent the base of the container to adjacent the upper end of the container.
6. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the blending element carries at spaced locations along its length outwardly projecting blending blades arranged to act on the food product to blend said product during rotation thereof.
7. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the location member

is hollow and the inner surface of the member has a non-circular section portion and permits location of a correspondingly shaped support member arranged to extend into the location member to prevent movement of the container about the rotational axis of the blending element during blending.

- 5 8. A container according to any one of the preceding claims comprising closure means for said upper opening which is arranged for sealing engagement with said opening, the closure member having openable access means for accessing food product after blending.
- 10 9. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the blending element is formed at its upper end, adjacent the top of the container, with coupling means arranged for releasable drive engagement with the drive means.
10. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the drive means is arranged to extend upwards through the location member to drivingly engage the blending element through the upper end of the location member.
- 15 11. A container according to any one of Claims 1-9 wherein the drive means is arranged to extend downwards through the upper end of the container to engage the blending element at the upper end thereof.
- 20 12. Food blending apparatus comprising a container according to any one of Claims 1-11, a support for the container during blending, a drive motor, an output drive shaft from the drive motor, and location means for locating the container fixedly on the support during blending, the drive shaft comprising drive means and being drivingly engageable with the blending element, whereby upon operation of the drive motor the blending element is operated.
- 25 13. Apparatus according to Claim 12 wherein the drive shaft extends upwardly from the support to extend along the location member for driving engagement with the

blending element.

14. Apparatus according to Claim 12 wherein the drive shaft extends downwardly through the upper opening into the container for driving engagement with the blending element the drive shaft and the container being relatively vertically movable to effect such engagement.
15. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 12-14 comprising a housing for locating containing food product, and microwave heating means located to direct microwave radiation at containers located within the housing to raise the temperature of the food contents of the container prior to blending.
16. Apparatus according to Claim 15 wherein the housing includes said location means comprising an upwardly extending location element arranged to locate with the location member of the container.
17. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 11-16 wherein the housing has an upper opening, with a closure for said opening, through which opening the container is inserted into the housing.
18. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 12-17 comprising microwave energy generating means located at the side walls of the housing at different heights, and transmitters in said side walls to direct microwave radiation at the container.
19. Apparatus according to Claim 18 comprising antennae means locatable internally of the container within the location member and communicating with microwave generation means whereby microwave energy is directed from said antennae means outwardly through the product in the container.
20. A method of blending food product in a container in which the container is fitted with a blending element located within the container, the container is charged with food

product, a closure member is applied to the top of the container to seal the container, the food product is treated to bring the food product to the desired temperature by cooling and/or heating the food product, the container is located in driving engagement with drive means to blend the food in the container, and the blended food is dispensed from the container.

- 5
21. A method according to Claim 20 wherein the food product in the container is cooled to a storage temperature after admission into the container and is then heated at a dispensing location by microwave energy to a dispensing temperature prior to a blending operation.
- 10 22. A method according to Claim 20 or 21 wherein microwave energy is directed outwardly from an internal region of the container.
23. A method according to Claim 22 wherein microwave energy is directed outwardly from antennae means located in a location member extending through food product in the container.
- 15 24. A method according to any one of Claims 20 - 23 in which the food product includes components so that blending mixes the components to generate carbonation within the product.
- 20 25. Food blending apparatus comprising a container for food product, a blending element located within the container, drive means for driving the blending element rotatably within the container to blend said food product, a housing for the container in which the container is locatable, and microwave energy generating means associated with the housing and with microwave energy emission means arranged to direct microwave energy into the housing and towards a container in the housing to heat food product in the container prior to effecting a blending operation by operation of
- 25 the drive means.

